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DAILY WORRIES.

by

T. S. Dale

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DAILY WORRIES,

WHERE THEY COME FROM ;
WHAT THEY DO FOR US ;
HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF THEM.

BY

REV. F. S. DALE, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "OUR TRIAL TIMES."

"If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still of countless price
God will provide for sacrifice.

"Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of Heaven in each we see:
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care."

Christian Year.

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DAILY WORRIES.

THERE is an old saying, "Light loads carried far, grow heavy." And so it is that our little daily worries often cause us much distress. Our regular daily life is not marked by many *great* joys or *great* sorrows. God sends to most of us a few of these, but not many. Our wise and loving father sees that too many great joys would intoxicate us, and make us unmindful of our work and of our destiny. He sees that too many great sorrows would crush us, and take all the heart out of us. And so, as

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one who knows our frame, He tempers our trials, and gently trains us for our better home, by means of a daily discipline, wherein are many *little* joys and *little* sorrows. Now if this be so, it follows at once, that it is a very important thing to make a right use of these little enjoyments, and of these little troubles. Our common-place life is intended by God to be our schooling for heaven. We are to learn not only from those providential mercies which strike us as most remarkable, not only from those heavy trials which God sometimes lays upon us; but also, and perhaps chiefly, from the common place events of each day.

God is teaching us daily, if we will but learn. He is teaching us by means of our little comforts, pleasures, and hopes. He is teaching us by means of our little annoyances, vexations, disappointments, and cares. And therefore I take it that the sub-

ject of daily worries is one well worth a more serious consideration than it often gets.

WORRIES: WHERE THEY COME FROM.

1. I need hardly lay it down as a certain fact, that man, whether he be good or bad, must have trouble in this life. Man is born unto trouble. It is part of his heritage here below. The plague of sin has so thoroughly eaten into the very frame-work of this world; it has so penetrated men's minds and men's bodies; it has so corrupted the whole visible creation; that all must be taken down and dissolved before the curse can be got rid of. As in the time of the Levitical law, the plague of leprosy broke out sometimes in the walls of a house, and the house had to be taken down, all the stones, and the

timber and the mortar, broken up—so the plague of sin is a fretting leprosy in this world of ours; nothing short of the breaking-up of the present system of things can remove the evil. We live in a disjointed, woe-worn world, and neither sin nor trouble can be cleared out of it, until Christ our Saviour returns to make all things new.

Therefore we say, it is a necessary consequence of the very nature of things here, that all men should meet with trouble. Sin is around, aye, and within us too; and therefore its dark shadow, sorrow, can never be far off. But the child of God, the believer in God's dear Son, needs not to look upon the troubles that surround him, as evils all against him. They indeed cannot but remind him of the presence of sin, and of his own poor sinful nature, and, therefore, they may well make him humble; but

these troubles are all sent to him by his Father, to be helps, not hindrances. Just as the curse of *labour* is turned into a blessing, so the curse is taken out of troubles, and all things work together for good to them that love God. But more of this presently.

Now we only remark this, that owing to the disordered state of things here, no man can escape trouble. God has not seen fit to spare even his own children, whom He loves best, from this common lot of all men. We have all of us our "DAILY WORRIES," little troubles and annoyances which we cannot escape. A man is thrown into the midst of some vexing, irritating, fellow-workmen. A poor mother, with her three or four little ones getting into mischief, or crying often for crying's sake, is almost beside herself. There is a cross-grained neighbour who seems determined to be as

disobliging as possible. A child comes home from school and has lost his new cap. Some one has been spreading false and unkind stories about. These and a thousand other annoyances are happening to some of us every day ; they are part of that common lot which God has appointed for us all.

But while it is true that little daily troubles and worries are inseparable from man's condition in this world of sin and trial, it is also true that most of us make very many worries for ourselves. This we do in three ways :—

I. By making that a trouble which is no trouble.

II. By making much of a little.

III. By failing to remove, when we can, the cause of annoyance.

I. *We often make a trouble for ourselves where there is none.*

Some persons seem to have a propensity for picking up everything in the shape of a trouble that they can meet with. They have become so accustomed to a state of worry, that they seem to feel out of their element if they have not a goodly pack of anxieties and troubles upon their back. So, if ever things are smooth and worries few, they must needs manufacture some vexations for themselves. They will look forward to to-morrow, or to the next week, and *fancy* all kinds of calamities which may come upon them—or they *fancy* that some one feels unkindly toward them—or that So-and-So laughed at them the other day—or that people generally slight them, and do not pay them so much respect as others get. But every one knows how easy it is to make

trouble out of nothing—how often persons do it.

II. *Yet more often do we make a great trouble out of a little one.*

Take the following as an illustration, or as an example, whichever you please. A man is walking through a narrow lane on a hot day; the flies come buzzing about him; now one settles on his nose, now on his chin. If the man walks on quietly, only knocking off the intruders as they settle on his face, he gets on very well; the annoyance is trifling enough. But if he allows himself to be downright teazed, and says, "I cannot bear this buzzing; get off, and leave me to myself;" and if he begins to lay about him right and left to drive off his tormentors, he will not have one enemy the less, but he will fret and fume

himself into a very unpleasant state of worry for a hot day. Now there are many other little troubles, besides flies, which we often make very much worse than they need be; instead of patiently and quietly putting up with what we cannot help, we fret against the petty annoyance, and thus make it ten-fold worse. For instance:—

A master has an irritating manner, and yet he is a thoughtful generous man in the main. Well, make up your mind to take no notice of his vexing ways; it is just a pill which you must swallow, and the less you think about it the better.

A neighbour is noisy, and will not take your friendly hint about the pleasures of quiet. Well, if you cannot manage to move to a better spot, make up your mind to put up with the annoyance as

it is, and not to make it all the greater by constantly worrying yourself about it.

III. *We sometimes make troubles for ourselves, by failing to remove, as we are able, the cause of annoyance.*

It is surprising how *lazy* persons often are, even in clearing away the things which trouble them. They suffer the plague of a smoky chimney, on and off, for months, rather than take the trouble of getting a new chimney-pot. They let a door creak on its hinges, and wake the child a dozen times, when a little oil would set all right in a minute. Have you never been kept awake some cold boisterous night by the slamming of a door or the creaking of a window, when you have been too lazy to turn out of bed and stop the noise?

But there is a far more serious case

which ought to be mentioned here. How many parents suffer not only worry and vexation, but bitter distress, from the ceaseless racket and disobedience of their children, because they have been too weak and silly, or too lazy and careless, to demand due respect and submission. Depend upon it, there are many of our worries which we might put a stop to altogether, if only we would bestir ourselves,—if we would *do* a little more, and *complain* a little less. And before we leave this point, we may say, generally, that though from the very nature of things here we must meet with many little daily troubles, there are a great many more troubles of our own making. We burden ourselves with *fancied* crosses, when we have no *real* ones; we fret and fume over a *little* annoyance, until it becomes a *great* one; or we suffer things to discomfort and

vex us, when a little common sense and diligence might put them all to rights. In other words, *God sends us all many little trials, but we make very many more for ourselves.*

WORRIES: WHAT THEY DO FOR US.

As it is with great afflictions, so it is with little worries, they do no good, but rather harm, to those who are without the grace of God. There is nothing in pain or in sorrow, *of themselves*, to bring blessing to the heart of man. Too often may God say to the obstinate sinner, "I have smitten you with sickness, and with bereavement, and with poverty; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." * Nay, more,—where the heart is without the Spirit of God, troubles only bring a curse with them. As the hot sun, while it gives fresh vigour

* Amos iv. 8, 9, 10, 11.

to the living, only hastens corruption in the dead, so afflictions, which God means for blessing, are only a curse unto those who are dead in their sins.

Even little daily worries tend to sour the heart, unless within that heart God dwells. Oh, let us all remember this (the thought is tremendously solemn), —if we are without the Spirit, if our hearts have never been taught to believe in the Son of God, and to love Him, *all that happens to us is really against us.* We are walking contrary to God, and therefore, necessarily, God is walking contrary to us. Sorrows, great or small, can bring no good to us; prosperity and success can be no real profit to us; for "the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." * There it ever rests, as a dark brooding cloud, blighting everything. We need not fear sorrow

* PROV. iii. 33.

as a guest in our homes, if Christ be there also. But to have *no* Christ there, and only distress, disappointment, vexation, and fear; this is indeed a dark portion. God forbid that it should be ours!

But if we are God's children by faith in Jesus Christ, then are we assured that our little vexations and annoyances, just as much as our greater trials, are heaven-sent messengers to help us on our way home. Each day, as I said before, is a day spent in God's school. He is the Teacher, and, in compassion to our ignorance and weakness, He gives us line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. So that it is our privilege, when once as poor lost sinners we have taken ourselves and our sins to Jesus the Saviour, to see in every little disappointment and cross a token of our Father's care, and a reminder of

our Father's home. We are being trained up into more and more of the temper and mind of Christ. We are learning meekness, patience, and trustfulness. God is sending us just the medicine we need to cure us of selfishness and fretfulness ; and if we quietly receive it as His appointment, we shall find there is not so much bitter in it as we thought.

We should, notwithstanding the daily wear and tear, live a very calm, happy life, if we could only look upon our troubles as God's loving discipline, most wisely portioned out to us, to make us like the image of his Son Jesus Christ. This confidence would cause "life's dullest, dreariest walk" to be a path of peace and hope ; our common-place worries would henceforth be full of interest ; and we should thankfully say with the Psalmist of old, "Thy loving

correction has made me great." * And this brings us to consider—

WORRIES: HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF THEM.

Now we may lay it down as a general rule with regard to little troubles and annoyances, that we make the *best* of them when we make the *least* of them. Nothing can be more foolish or unprofitable than to be always thinking of and examining into our worries,—looking at them through *magnifying glasses*. It has been said of crabbed and faultfinding people that they carry their own faults in a bag *behind* them, and their neighbours' faults in a bag *before*, so that the latter are always kept well in sight. So it may be said that many a grumbler carries his mercies and comforts in a bag behind

* PSALM xviii. 35.

him, while he carefully keeps all his little troubles in front, so as to have them always in mind. If such a grumbler would only begin sometimes to count up his blessings, to look at them a little more closely, and to throw the bag of troubles behind, what a much brighter, happier, face he would show to his friends!

But, after all, the difficulty is how to *do* what we know we ought to do. It is easy to say to another, "Don't worry yourself;" but when the rubs, and crosses, and disappointments, come to ourselves, then it is no easy thing to make the best of them. Let us therefore look a little more closely and seriously at the question, how to make the best of our daily worries. I can only attempt a few simple hints.

1. *We must seek to remember why God suffers these daily troubles to befall us.*

It is for this end,—that He may bring to light that which He sees to be within us: that He may show us to ourselves. We are all very apt to think that our circumstances, our peculiar position in life, our various trials, *make* us what we are. There is very little truth in this. These act as outward tests; they *show* us what we are, what God finds within us; they bring to light the hidden secrets of our hearts; and this is one of their great uses. We are very slow to believe that our hearts are so foolish, and weak, and sinful, as God knows them to be. We give them credit for far more good than they deserve, and therefore He very wisely and lovingly sends us day after day, tests to bring out that which is in us.

We meet with some annoyance or other—it brings to light our *impatience;* we are disappointed in some expectation—and we find that we are wanting in *submission;* a look, or a word touches our *pride;* and so on.

Now, if we viewed our daily worries in this light, how much real good should we get out of them! There would be a high interest about our commonest life. We should feel of each petty vexation or disturbance, "This is only another little test sent to prove me, to show me what is in my heart," and so, instead of daring to fret against such discipline, we should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Surely it is meet to be said unto God," "I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which *I see not, teach Thou me:* if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more."

If ever we *fret* against our troubles, if shows that we have a very imperfect sense of our exceeding selfishness. If we remembered that God discovers in us much lurking sin,—and that He is daily making use of his own method for detecting the sin, and bringing it under our notice, in order that we may be driven to seek deliverance from its curse, —we should never murmur at those trials which prove to us what is in our hearts. David's prayer should be our prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." *

Let us then seek to keep this in mind. —Those daily troubles which try our temper, or patience, or humility, or faith, instead of being against us, may, by

* PSALM cxxxix, 23, 24.

God's blessing, be most useful to us. They give us fresh insight into our own hearts. They show us where we are chiefly wanting. They warn us of our weak points. We think, perhaps, sometimes that we should get on much better without them; but God knows we should become proud, and self-sufficient, and slothful; and so these trials and worries come day after day, to humble us, and to prove us *to show us that which is within us.*

2. *Let us learn to take all our troubles, little and great, at once to God.*

As we receive them all from Him, so let us take them all to Him. I need not tell you how slow most of us are in going to God, especially with our little worries: they seem too insignificant to pray to God about; we should be almost ashamed to mention them on our knees;

and so we try to bear them alone. The consequence is, we find them too heavy for us. For while it is true that the very heaviest trial helps us on our road if we only roll it upon God, it is also true that even the very lightest trouble will break us down if we endeavour to bear it alone.

We often see persons who seem quite worn out, and broken down, by the wear and tear of trifles. They have had no great sorrows, no crushing calamity, and yet they are broken in spirit. They can do nothing but complain, and fret, and croak; they are always looking on the dark side of the hedge. Now they would never have fallen into this pitiable condition if they had followed the Bible exhortations, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." * "Be careful for nothing, but *in everything*, by prayer and supplication, with thanks-

* PSALM lv. 22.

giving, let your request be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." *

If God sends us the very least of our worries, surely we cannot do wrong to ask Him to give his blessing with the least. If the trouble is not too small for us to feel, it is not too small for Him to bless. The fact is, we have, for the most part, a very imperfect understanding of the true nature of prayer. As an illustration of what it should be, let us take the letters which pass between two thorough friends when they are for a time absent the one from the other. The one letter *answers* the other. The gift or kindly message sent by one, is acknowledged by the other. Now, if God sends us *anything*, whether it be a

* PHIL. iv. 6, 7.

little trial, or a little comfort, we should at once acknowledge it, as from his hand. We should ask Him how we may best use it ; and we should *wait for his answer.* Oh, if we thus kept up a constant intercourse with our Father in heaven, simply and trustingly telling Him all, and asking the guidance of his Holy Spirit at all times, we should know the meaning of that precious promise, "Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." *

3. *Let us bear our little daily troubles for God.*

They not only come *from* Him ; they are not only to be taken *to* Him ; but they are to be borne *for* Him. He has sent them for our good. We may so

* ISAIAH xxvi. 3

receive them as to bring glory unto our Father who is in heaven. Every duty is easy when we see in it a privilege. If we keep in mind that God is putting honour upon us, by permitting us to show our love to Him, and our trust in Him before the world, we shall rejoice in those very trials and vexations which afford us the opportunity of thus glorifying Him. How diligently shall we watch against any fretfulness, or discontent, or harshness, which may disgrace our profession ! How anxiously shall we seek after that calm, patient, unruffled temper, which ever marked our Divine Master, and which, perhaps more than anything else, adorns, in his followers, the doctrine of God our Saviour.

When we look upon our daily worries as opportunities for showing forth the praises of our God and Saviour, then

we have learned indeed how to make the best of them.

CONCLUSION.

Seeing that we are in a world of mercy, where our very troubles come to us charged with messages of love, if only we understand them aright, let us take heed unto God's dealings with us. Amid all the varied turmoil and perplexities of life, God's children may hear their Father's voice speaking comfortably unto them. He assures them, that "all things work together for good," * that He is at the helm ordering all things; and that *all* things are theirs.

There is one manifestation of his love, to which above all others He points them as an unanswerable proof and as-

* ROMANS viii, 28.

surance of his goodness and mercy. To that the Apostle Paul turns, when in rapture of confidence he says, "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"* True, we are privileged, if we are the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ, to see in every incident and accident around us the love and care of our Father; and yet we are not acting wisely, nor living as Christians should live, if we look mainly to God's *providential* mercies as proof of his goodness. No, it is to the dying Son that our hearts ought instinctively to turn for sure and certain proof that all God's thoughts and ways are love. Strange that we should ask for further sign or plainer proof! He that spared not his own Son, must love

*ROMANS viii. 31, 32.

us. Oh, whenever we are tempted to murmur or to doubt, let us fall back at once upon this,—and let us answer every suggestion of the devil, every suspicion of our own hearts, with this question,—"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* God *must* be for us, for He spared not his own Son.

But while there is God's sure word of comfort for those who believe in his dear Son, there is also a most solemn word of warning for those who are children of disobedience, and despisers of Christ. You find even the little troubles of life, its petty cares and disappointments grievous; how, then, can you hope to bear the sorer judgments of God? "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land

* ROMANS viii. 31.

of peace wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan ?" * If even this life, where you have your *best portion*, is so troublesome and unsatisfactory, how will you fare when God shall arise to judgment? Troubles and vexations here, are, after all, but a very feeble rehearsal of the indignation and wrath, the tribulation and anguish, which shall come upon the ungodly at last.

Oh then, take every little cross and trouble now, as a gentle and most merciful warning from that God who calleth you continually to repentance. Hear, in the trials of every day, the voice of Jesus inviting you to Himself for rest. Accept the free pardon purchased by his blood-shedding. Believe in God as your reconciled Father; submit yourselves unto Him; ask the guidance of his

* JEREMIAH xii. 5.

Spirit; seeking always his glory, and serving Him duly in your vocation with thankgiving. Then shall your song be :—

"*Now* all my way appears
Steps unto Heaven,
All that Thou sendest me
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me,
Nearer, my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

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